



# Foreword

Policy evaluation means systematically assessing the design, the implementation, the results and the effects of policy. The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) carries out systematic, independent evaluation research on the results of Dutch foreign policy. IOB evaluates policies based on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and – if feasible – also the coherence and sustainability of the results achieved.

This annual report provides a snapshot of the results from the policy reviews, evaluations and other studies conducted by IOB this past year. Most of these concern parts of the Dutch bilateral policy in the area of foreign trade and development cooperation (FTDC) and other foreign policies, including also diplomatic relations. The annual report also provides a summary of ongoing studies and contributions by IOB in support of the quality of evaluation work by other departments within the Ministry and by the Dutch embassies and consulates.

In 2018 IOB completed one policy review, one evaluation and five other studies. The policy review is on non-proliferation, arms control and export control of strategic weapons. The evaluation is on the Netherlands as a host for international organisations. The remaining other studies concern the following themes: monitoring systems for aid to Syria, the evaluability of interventions for climate adaptation, education for refugee children and employment for young refugees, poverty and inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa and the relationship between migration and development.

This report begins with a description of completed studies that fall under the budget for Foreign Affairs (FA, chapter V) and under the budget for FTDC. This is followed by a summing up of ongoing studies. Finally, the report presents information on communication, cooperation and other IOB activities.

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A young boy with dark hair is smiling and holding a baby. The baby is wearing a teal knitted sweater. They are in an outdoor setting with white tents in the background, suggesting a refugee camp. The text 'Completed studies' is overlaid on the image in white.

# Completed studies

## Foreign Affairs



### Policy review of non-proliferation, arms control and export control of strategic goods (2009-2016) | Navigating with a fixed course



*This evaluation falls under policy article 2 of the FA budget – Security and stability*

Nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms control are increasingly under pressure from growing regional and global tensions and declining support for multilateral institutions and treaties. This also has direct and indirect consequences for international security and stability, and they are therefore of great interest to the Netherlands.

The policy review focuses on Dutch policies with regards to nuclear and chemical weapons and export control of strategic goods (i.e. military goods and so-called dual use good, which can be used for both civil and military purposes). The review also analyses the role of the Netherlands in the creation of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013.

The review was presented to parliament on 22 January, together with a policy reaction from the minister of Foreign Affairs and the minister for Foreign Trade and Decevelopment Cooperation. IOB has commissioned SIPRI to undertake an extensive *literature study* of relevant international developments in the policy field.





## Main findings

- The MFA is a skilful and internationally recognised player in the field of non-proliferation, arms control, and export control of strategic goods.
- It has consistently promoted Dutch policies in these fields, with and without the support of like-minded countries. It has also tried to keep the international dialogue ongoing by tabling concrete proposals to strengthen and implement existing agreements.
- However, the results of these efforts vary and they are sometimes discernable only after several years. After all, effectiveness is heavily dependent on international power relations, and the Netherlands is only a small player.
- In the field of export controls of strategic goods, the Netherlands was clearly stricter than many other European countries, especially when these goods were destined for the Middle East. Complying to international agreements remained paramount, even if this limited business' freedom to manoeuvre. In the field of export controls of military goods, the Netherlands played a positive role in helping to create the Arms Trade Treaty.



## Lessons

The Netherlands has a large interest in international security, stability and compliance with the relevant international treaties. Continued Dutch engagement on the various dossiers, no matter how difficult, therefore remains crucial. This is also recognised internationally. The main themes that characterise Dutch policy will remain relevant for the future.

The Netherlands should continue to insist on:

- Universalising, complying to and strengthening the existing treaties and international agreements in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and export controls. The Non Proliferation Treaty, the creation of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear arms and the entry into force of the treaty prohibiting nuclear tests are all highly relevant.
- Countering the politicisation of the debate on the Chemical Arms Treaty. Withdrawing from the international organisations that play a crucial role in implementing these treaties would be a disastrous approach.
- A more harmonised policy on European export controls for strategic goods. This concerns both a more uniform appliance of the criteria for assessing applications for exporting strategic goods and a better exchange of information among EU member states of their export control policies and better reporting on policy outcomes. It also concerns an EU wide and strict compliance with agreements on arms exports to the Middle East. There are no reasons to ease Dutch restrictions towards countries involved in the war in Yemen.
- More transparency and verification, as important confidence-building measures to ensure that states with nuclear arms will eventually destroy these weapons, that states will not produce new weapons of mass destruction and that they will supply strategic goods only by strictly applying what is internationally agreed.



## Evaluation The Netherlands as a host country for international organisations



The implementation of this so-called host country policy involves a large number of players. The evaluation is limited to those policy measures and aspects concerning the climate for settlement which the MFA is able to influence either directly or indirectly, for instance through consultation and coordination with other relevant Government parties or the Municipality of The Hague. The focus is on (1) developments in the host country policy, (2) the Dutch settlement climate and the role of host to international organisations already settled in the Netherlands and (3) the policy for attracting new international organisations. The main aim of the study is to inform the MFA and the meetings of Secretaries-General on elements for a revised Dutch host country policy.

The report was finalised in January 2018, providing ample time to serve as input for decision-making on the new policy. The report's main recommendations were welcomed in a policy reaction by the MFA and the cabinet.



### Main findings

- The policy improvements that were planned since IOB's policy evaluation in 2008 have been limited in scope and effect. There existed a persistent unclarity and a lack of vision on the division of duties, on interdepartmental coordination and on cost sharing. Nor was there a widely-shared assessment framework for determining the level of investments that the Dutch government was prepared to make for hosting exiting international organisations and for attracting new ones. There was no sense of urgency on these matters.
- As in 2008, diverging views on the host country policy among the various ministries involved, resulted in deadlock. This was especially evident in the field of fiscal privileges and immunities.
- The creation in 2016 of the Governmental working party on international organisations did contribute to a more coherent interdepartmental policy implementation. However, a link to the higher-administrative political strategic level is still missing.



### Lessons

- Implement the strategic and policy recommendations that were promised in various policy memoranda, including the drafting of an integral strategy with an assessment framework and a government-wide budget.
- A coherent host country policy needs a balanced, government-wide institutional structure. Link the technical and operational level of the Governmental working party on international organisations to the higher-administrative strategic level.
- Put a better system in place for monitoring the development and implementation of the host country policy. This should also include the systematic monitoring of incidents, complaints and lead times.



## Review of the monitoring systems of three projects in Syria | AJACS, White Helmets and NLA

*This evaluation falls under policy article 2 of the FA budget – Security and stability*



Implementing and monitoring projects in conflict and war situations such as in Syria is highly challenging. Security restrictions often prevent external project implementors from monitoring their projects in a hands-on manner. Moreover, the situation on the ground is often complex and volatile. At the same time, monitoring is essential for guaranteeing adaptive project implementation and for maintaining good communication lines between donors and implementers on (new) opportunities, risks and (potential) limitations.

This brief review examines the quality of the monitoring systems of three programmes in Syria supported by the Netherlands, i.e. While Helmets, AJACS and NLA. The focus is on whether the monitoring systems in place offer sufficient guarantees to detect risks in a timely manner. The review does not offer a substantive (effect) evaluation of the programmes.



### Main findings

- When implementing programmes in conflict areas such as Syria from a distance, risks, irregularities and fraud cannot be excluded.
- All programmes examined have set up monitoring systems that contribute to the timely detection of irregularities and to adequate interventions.
- IOB has found deficiencies in the monitoring systems that put pressure on the quality, completeness and objectiveness of the monitoring of risks. Other points for attention were found with regard to the management culture of the organisations involved and the transparency and coordination among the various partners.
- IOB considers the monitoring of AJACS and the two NLA programmes to be adequate and that of the White Helmets to be inadequate. However, White Helmets are working on improvements.



# Completed studies

## Foreign trade and development cooperation



### Transition and inclusive development in Sub Sahara Africa | An analysis of poverty and inequality



This study aims to analyse the structural backgrounds and social and economic developments in Sub-Saharan Africa for a broader public. It examines the causes of persistently high levels of poverty and suggests several remedies, primarily for the governments in the region, but also for donors. The study is based on reports by international organisations, academic literature, and country evaluations of Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.



#### Main findings

- Development in Sub-Saharan Africa is still not inclusive. Prognoses suggest that the international goal of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030 will not be met. Nor will the goal be met to reduce inequality within and across countries in the region. Young people, and especially young women are among the groups with the lowest incomes and the largest insecurity of livelihoods.
- The causes are: persistently high poverty rates from the start, incomes far below the poverty line, imbalanced economic growth based on exporting raw materials and agricultural crops, and a small manufacturing sector. This results from poor economic infrastructures and low levels of education. Service sectors tend to have a dual structure: highly productive services such as banking and insurance are gaining importance, but these do not generate any jobs. The highest increase in jobs takes place in the low-productive informal service sector.





## Lessons

- Finding jobs for the 15-20 million young people that will enter the labour market will require a multisectoral strategy with the following key elements:
  - Raising productivity in agriculture through targeted support for smallholders, aimed at improving access to agricultural inputs and tools, supporting mechanisation and demand-driven training in backward rural areas;
  - Strengthening infrastructure in backward regions through investments in roads, energy supply, water and sanitation and (other) public amenities;
  - Stimulating a labour intensive (agro)industry through strengthening the transport infrastructure, energy supply, access to capital and improving the relevance of education for the labour market;
  - Investing in secondary and vocational training to realise the transition towards more productive agricultural, industrial and service sectors;
  - Sex education and a wider availability of contraception to slow down the population increase.
  - Investing in basic health care for the poorest groups;
  - Supporting cash transfer programmes. These are effective in the short run to reduce poverty and inequality.



## Development and migration | Literature study



Restricting *irregular migration* plays an important role in EU migration policy and the national migration policies of its member states. It involves people who want to settle in another country but who do not have permission to do so. Addressing the root causes of irregular migration through international cooperation is seen as a policy priority. For this reason, the Dutch cabinet invests in economic development, security and the rule of law in the countries of origin and transit. Its focus regions are West Afrika/Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. An extra annual amount of EUR 128 million is reserved for reception in these regions, EUR 25 million for migration cooperation and EUR 80 million for addressing the root causes of poverty, migration and terror. Part of the extra funds for humanitarian aid (EUR 162 million annually) is reserved for sheltering refugees.

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## Main findings

- Globalisation and conflicts have resulted in an increase in international migration over the past years. Migrants increasingly choose richer countries as their destinations. These countries try to limit so-called irregular migration, i.e. the entry and settlement without the necessary permits.
- The effectiveness of such measures depends on the degree to which these are aligned to the root causes of migration. Most migration is rooted in wealth differences between countries. At the same time, research has shown that as countries develop, emigration levels do not drop immediately and will actually rise initially. However, this effect is not as large as some migration experts suggest.
- Apart from differences in wealth, other factors also play a role in determining irregular migration. These relate to repression, loss of income and a lack of perspective in the country of origin.
- Development cooperation can contribute to reducing irregular migration, but don't expect miracles. Its contribution is limited compared to the size of the underlying problems.
- Refugees and economic migrants often have similar motives for leaving their country; therefore, the distinction between these groups is not always sharp.



## Lessons

- Cooperation in the field of foreign trade and investment, in combination with agreements on temporary migration and internal measures are the most promising measures for managing migration from more developed countries.
- In poorer countries, providing development cooperation is more cost effective. Promoting education and the development of labour intensive economic sectors are sensible options.



## Literature study education for refugee children and employment for young refugees



This short literature study aims to offer options to design policies aimed at providing education to refugee children and jobs to young refugees in the MENA region and the Horn of Africa. It is based on evaluation material in English that is accessible to the public, on academic and 'grey' literature. The study was completed in January 2018.



## Main findings

- The research material available is of insufficient quality to draw conclusions on what works and on which specific interventions should be supported. The monitoring and evaluation of future interventions should be improved. Gender issues require more specific attention.
- The research material available suggests that the following initiatives may be relatively promising:
  - Education: training teachers, improving access to education, both within refugee camps and in existing schools, conditional cash transfers, accreditation and reform of curricula (in particular with regard to the language of teaching).
  - Employment: offering a long term perspective combining various activities and paying attention to the legal impairments to working in the country of destination.
- Both in education and in employment, blueprints should be avoided. There is a need for context specific needs assessments and a detailed survey of all the activities of the various national and international players.

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## Monitoring and evaluating mainstreamed adaptation to climate change | A synthesis study on climate change in development cooperation



Worldwide climate change unevenly affects people in developing countries. In the Paris international climate agreement (2015), governments and the private sector have pledged jointly to invest 100 billion dollars annually in climate adaptation and mitigation in developing countries in the period 2020-2025. How effective will these joint investments be? To analyse this, progress towards the climate goals will have to be monitored and evaluated.

This synthesis study examines the 'what and how' of monitoring and evaluating these efforts on the basis of concrete, practical examples. Which indicators are suitable from an adaptation perspective? To what extent do these differ from 'standard' development indicators? What are the pro's and con's of various evaluation methods?



## Main findings

- Interventions aimed at climate adaptation are more effective if they are embedded into broader development goals and programmes. Such 'mainstreaming' serves two aims. Firstly, larger adaptation gains can be obtained, because these are not one off, small-scale and isolated interventions. Secondly, the consequences of future climate change can also be taken into consideration, thus ensuring that the development results actually obtained will not be undermined.
- Monitoring and evaluating adaptation interventions can support proper mainstreaming. If adaptation projects are not designed and planned carefully in advance and if they cannot rely on a proper theory of change describing the main underlying assumptions, there is a large risk that they will stick to regular development projects in which climate change merely serves as a fig leaf. This means that both the climate adaptation goals and the indicators suitable for monitoring the specific adaptation elements have to be specified in advance.



# Ongoing studies

## Foreign Affairs



### Policy review of the Netherlands and the European Neighbourhood Policy

*This evaluation falls under policy article 3 of the MFA budget – European cooperation.*

Research for the policy review ‘The Netherlands and the European Neighbourhood Policy’ continued in 2018. The European Union attempts to contribute, by means of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), to a stable, secure and prosperous neighbouring region, sometimes referred to as a ‘ring of friends’. In doing so, the Union offers its eastern and southern neighbours economic integration, political association, mobility and financial and technical assistance, in exchange for reforms in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and a market-driven economy. The ENP was revised in 2015. Since then, there has been more emphasis on stabilising the region, differentiating between neighbouring countries, and creating more equality and ownership. This policy review concerns two policy objectives of the MFA’s budget: 3.2 (‘effective, efficient and coherent action by the Union regarding third countries and regions, including developing countries’) and 2.5: (‘promoting transition in priority areas’).

The study design consists of the following components:

- a literature study on the ENP’s effectiveness and coherence;
- four country-specific case studies of two eastern neighbourhood countries (Georgia and Azerbaijan) and two southern ones (Egypt and Tunisia);
- a desk study supplemented by interviews related to European financial and technical assistance to neighbourhood countries;
- an analysis of the way in which the Netherlands helped to give shape to and implement the ENP.



In 2015, IOB finalised the evaluation of the Matra programme in countries belonging to the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). In 2015, IOB also evaluated Dutch support for Arabic countries in transition in the Middle East and North Africa (with a focus on Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia). Both evaluations serve as a building block for this policy review, which will be finalised in 2019.



## Policy review Consular services and the advocacy of Dutch values

*This evaluation falls under policy article 4 of the MFA budget – Consular advocacy and the international promotion of Dutch values and interests.*

The policy review consists of a synthesis study of existing research on the various policy aims falling under article 4. This will be supplemented with research into the follow-up of policy recommendations made in IOB's policy reviews on international cultural policy, public diplomacy and the Dutch host country policy. The review will be finalised in 2019.



## Evaluation Consular services and regulating the movement of people

*This evaluation falls under policy article 4 of the MFA budget – Consular advocacy and the international promotion of Dutch values and interests.*

How did the ministry carry out its policy during the period 2011–2016 in the area of consular services and visa services? And how effectively and efficiently was this policy implemented? These are the key questions of this policy evaluation. The focus is on general consular assistance, travel advice, crisis management and response, and visas. The evaluation also looks at the strategic choices made by the management of the department of Consular Affairs and Visa Policy (DCV) during the evaluation period: centralisation, digitisation, outsourcing certain executive tasks and devoting more attention to the relationship between the consular field and other policy areas. The study is based on various sources, including policy documents and interviews with employees at the department and other stakeholders (e.g. other government bodies and the business sector). Two sub-studies are also conducted, on the MFA's so-called 'multi-channel strategy' and on the efficiency of consular service provision. The evaluation will be delivered in Spring 2019.



# Ongoing studies

## Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation



### Case studies aid, trade and investment

*This evaluation falls under policy article 1 of the FTDC budget – Sustainable trade and investments.*

The policy note entitled 'A world to gain: a new agenda for aid, trade and investment', published in April 2013, outlined a new policy for foreign trade and development cooperation. To respond to developments in the world and manage the changing relations with partner countries, three key objectives were specified: poverty reduction, sustainable growth worldwide and success for Dutch companies abroad. Eight partner countries were identified as transition countries where the relationship would be based on both aid and trade. 'A world to gain' did not indicate how the integration of aid, trade and investment should take form, nor how this should lead to synergy between the available instruments.

This study focuses on the way in which the policy process aimed at the integration of aid, trade and investment and the transition from aid to trade unfolded in practice in three partner countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Kenya. As such, it will be part of the broader policy evaluation of 2020. The study does not look at the effectiveness and impact of the aid, trade and investment agenda, but provides a policy reconstruction and considers the policy's synergy and coherence in these three partner countries.



## Impact evaluation Economic diplomacy

*This evaluation falls under policy article 1 of the FTDC budget – Sustainable trade and investments.*

Economic diplomacy is one of the spearheads of the current Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policy, but it has not yet been evaluated since the Directorate-General for Foreign Economic Relations (DGBEB) was integrated into the MFA. This evaluation aims to gain an understanding of the impact of interventions that were (and are) carried out in the framework of economic diplomacy. In addition, it aims to align itself with the DGBEB's modernisation agenda and thus contribute to its learning process.

The main research question is: in what way and to what degree do interventions of an economic diplomatic nature help to strengthen the Netherlands' international trade and investment position? The study will be completed by mid-2019.

Although the justification for government interventions in the area of economic diplomacy has obtained broad support, as yet little is known about the impact of this policy. As a result, it is unclear to what extent and how economic diplomacy contributes to the objectives of Dutch foreign economic policy. Lessons from this evaluation could contribute to the effectiveness of current and future economic diplomatic policy.



## Evaluation of Dutch ICSR policy

*This evaluation falls under policy article 1 of the FTDC budget – Sustainable trade and investments.*

International Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) is an important spearhead of the aid and trade agenda. A key question in this evaluation is whether the ICSR policy has generated concrete results and which lessons we can draw for future policy. The evaluation focuses on five of the policy's pillars: (1) sector covenants; (2) frameworks for business sector instruments, (3) frameworks for government procurement; (4) activities of embassies; and (5) international cooperation and legislation. The evaluation examines the assumption that these activities contribute to better due diligence by Dutch companies in line with OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and therefore also contribute to reducing risks in their global production chains.

In addition to the question of effectiveness, other evaluation questions are also considered. For example, on how the results relate to the efforts (efficiency), whether and to what extent the pillars reinforce each other (coherence) and how relevant and additional the ICSR policy is. In addition to desk research, the study also consists of talks with parties involved in the Netherlands, but also with parties abroad. A total of four country studies are planned– Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia and India – in order to gain insight into local circumstances and the impact of policy on the ground. The results of the evaluation are expected to be delivered by Summer 2019.



## Evaluation of the Netherlands National Contact Point OECD directives

*This evaluation falls under policy article 1 of the FTDC Budget – Sustainable trade and investments*

International Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) is a spearhead in the agenda for sustainable trade and investment. The independent Netherlands National Contact Point (NCP) OECD Guidelines is an important instrument for stimulating ICSR among Dutch firms. This evaluation examines the NCP's functioning: how effective has it been in fulfilling its two main tasks, i.e. 1. raising awareness about the OECD's Guidelines among firms, trade unions and non-governmental organisations (ngo's) and 2. mediating with regard to specific complaints about alleged non-compliance to the Guidelines by Dutch firms? The evaluation also examines other aspects of the NCP's work, such as its role in ICSR sector covenants and research into sector-specific risks.

The evaluation examines results obtained, how these are valued by stakeholders and the capacity available. It also formulates lessons for the NCP's future functioning.

Apart from looking into the NCP's effectiveness, other evaluation questions are also examined. How relevant is its mandate in stimulating ICSR, how efficient and timely are the complaint procedures, and how suitable is the NCP's institutional set-up for effective and independent action? The research involves examining jurisprudence, studying complaint cases, interviewing various stakeholders and conducting a survey among representatives of ngo's and trade unions. Since the NCP forms an element of the wider Dutch ICSR policy, the NCP and the ICSR evaluations will be published simultaneously, by Summer 2019.

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## Evaluation of the Reconstruction Fund 2012-2015 and the Strategic Partnerships Chronic Crises 2014-2016

*This evaluation falls under policy article 4 of the FTDC budget – Peace and security for development.*

The Reconstruction Fund (2012-2015) and the Strategic Partnerships Chronic Crises (SPCC, 2014-2016) are instruments that focus on achieving the objectives of one of the spearheads of Dutch development policy: Security and the Rule of Law. These two instruments have provided support worth more than 150 million euros to 36 NGO projects in 26 countries and regions. Both instruments are precursors of the current Addressing Root Causes (ARC) Fund.

The evaluation focuses on both the funding process of both instruments and the impact of the projects. In addition, the evaluation also examines the tender procedure of the ARC Fund, to identify to what extent the lessons learned from both instruments have already been incorporated. The main research question is: to what extent have the Reconstruction Fund and SPCC contributed to progress towards the objectives of the spearhead Security and the Rule of Law in the regions where the projects have been implemented?

To answer this question a desk study was conducted of all existing documentation of the projects, and talks have already taken place with the implementing staff of all organisations and with the policy officers involved. Given the varying quality of the project evaluations, however, more in-depth research was also conducted, involving field research conducted in regions in countries where relatively many projects have been implemented using both instruments. The selected regions for field research are:



- South Sudan: Western Bahr el Ghazal
- South Sudan: Central Equatoria
- Ethiopia: Oromia
- Ethiopia: Somali Region
- Burundi: Cibitoke
- Burundi: Bujumbura Rural

In addition, literature research was conducted on the effects of similar interventions in comparable countries. The final report is due by mid 2019.



# Ongoing studies

## Other



### Study on the functioning of strategic partnerships

Autumn 2018, IOB started a study on the functioning of strategic partnerships between the MFA and civil society organisations. The main reason is that the current strategic partnerships (known as the 'Dialogue and Dissent and the SRHR partnerships) of the MFA's department for Social Development will end in 2020. To be able to start new partnerships in 2021, the department has until May 2019 to consult stakeholders and other parties, including also IOB.

This study focuses on the functioning of the partnership instrument and does not examine its ultimate effectiveness. That will be the objective of a later IOB study. IOB will examine four main aspects: (1) complementarity of roles, (2) modalities for financing, (3) accountability to donors and to southern stakeholders, (4) ownership and relative autonomy of civil society organisations. The key research questions are: how did the partnerships function? What are the main causes for this? Which lessons can be drawn for future strategic partnerships?

The research will consist of interviews with policy-makers at the MFA and with representatives from civil society organisations in the Netherlands. In addition, four country case studies will be undertaken, i.e. on Mali, Uganda, Sudan and Nepal, on the basis of conversations with southern organisations, Dutch embassies and other relevant stakeholders.

After completion of the fieldwork in 2019, the results will be discussed in a webinar with southern stakeholders and in a workshop with Dutch parties involved. This will serve as additional input for the final report, which will be published mid-2019.



# Communication and cooperation



## Communication

In 2018, IOB adopted a new mandate and protocol in which existing regulations on its independent role, its procedures and practices are clarified and laid down in a single, handy format. IOB also formulated a condensed set of rules describing the role of official (MFA) members and external (non-MFA) members of its regular, external reference groups that accompany IOB evaluations.

## Academic Practitioner meeting IOB and EGAP

In October, IOB teamed-up with the worldwide Evidence in Government and Politics (EGAP) network to organise a so-called Academic-Practitioner Meeting for policy-makers, policy researchers and policy evaluators. 'State of evidence' presentations were held on preventing violent extremism and on migration and refugees.





## Lectures, presentations and conferences

### March

- *Policy review Disarmament*  
Guest lecture Maastricht University
- *Policy review Disarmament*  
Guest lecture Leiden University

### April

- *Theory of change of Dutch ICSR Policy*  
Meeting for external stakeholders, The Hague

### May

- *The informal politics of policy evaluation*  
Guest lecture Campus The Hague, Leiden University

### June

- *Better ways of trading*  
Presentation for DfID, London

### July

- *Reviewing the European Neighbourhood Policy from a Dutch perspective*  
Presentation for medior and senior Tunisian diplomats, The Hague

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### September

- *Theory of change of Dutch ICSR Policy*  
Presentation for the Hague Evaluation Network, The Hague

### October

- *Development and migration. Literature study*  
Presentation for Cordaid, The Hague
- *Reviewing the European Neighbourhood Policy from a Dutch perspective*  
Presentation for junior diplomats of the Austrian partnership, The Hague

### November

- *Development and migration. Literature study*  
Presentation for the Include Platform's conference, The Hague
- *The informal politics of policy evaluation*  
Guest lecture Campus The Hague, Leiden University
- *Theory of change of Dutch ICSR Policy*  
Presentation for Erasmus University, Rotterdam





## International meetings

### OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation

The Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) is the forum of evaluation departments of members of the DAC (Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Increasingly, EvalNet works with new partners (private funds and non-DAC donors, for example). The focus is also on strengthening the synergy between DAC, EvalNet and DAC's other aid bodies. In 2018, at the request of DAC, Evalnet organised a broad consultation process on renewing the 'big five' DAC standard evaluation criteria in view of the changing role of development cooperation and the SDG agenda. Evalnet also facilitates access to the publications of evaluation departments of the various DAC members – see the DAC Evaluation Resource Centre DeRec at: <http://www.oecd.org/derec/?hf=5&b=0&s=score>

IOB plays the following role in the network:

1. promoting the relevance of EvalNet and the effectiveness of this aid body's methodology, taking into account DAC's work programme, the 'beyond aid' agenda, the SDGs and, increasingly, issues in the areas of security, conflict and migration.
  2. supporting and actively participating in initiatives by EvalNet that focus on gaining a better understanding of the effectiveness of multilateral organisations and partnerships;
  3. promoting an effective and efficient division of labour regarding evaluation departments within EvalNet, including learning and using each other's evaluations and planning joint evaluations.
- Since 2017, the director of IOB has acted as one of EvalNet's two vice-chairpersons.

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### EU HEADS

The EU HEADS meeting is an initiative of the Evaluation Unit of the Directorate-General for development cooperation of the European Commission. The annual meeting is used to discuss the unit's evaluation plans, to exchange evaluation programs and to look for opportunities for cooperation. In recent years this has led to the development of a joint methodology for the evaluation of budget support and the implementation of joint evaluations in that area. The aim is to extend the approach to other forms of programme aid.

### Nordic+

For several years now, IOB has been part of the Nordic+ group on evaluation, a group of like-minded (mainly Scandinavian) evaluation departments, which are also members of EvalNet (see above). In 2018, meetings took place in Stockholm and Bonn, where SIDA and Deval respectively acted as hosts. The issues that were discussed included blended finance, the 'big five' evaluation criteria of the DAC, also in the context of the SDGs, strengthening evaluation capacity, evaluating sustainability and ethical dilemma's in evaluation.

## DACH Treffen

IOB participates in the 'DACH Treffen', the annual meeting of the (partly) German-language evaluation departments in Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Belgium. IOB was invited to the Belgian evaluation department for development cooperation and foreign trade. Ideas were exchanged on migration and development –informed by an IOB presentation, on evaluating sustainability in line with the SDG's, on evaluation in fragile states and within the nexus humanitarian aid and development. There were also discussions on common dilemma's relating to independence, relevance, complexity, theories of change, relations with other ministries and policy coherence.

## Hague Evaluation Network (HEN)

In September 2017, the Independent Oversight Mechanism (IOM) of the International Criminal Court in The Hague created a network of professionals working at the evaluation departments of international organisations (also) based in The Hague. This so-called Hague Evaluation Network aims to hold regular meetings to exchange evaluation experience and knowledge for strengthening the institutional and professional base for evaluation. IOB is also active in this network. HEN has its own website:

<https://thehaguebasedevaluationnetwork.wordpress.com/about/>



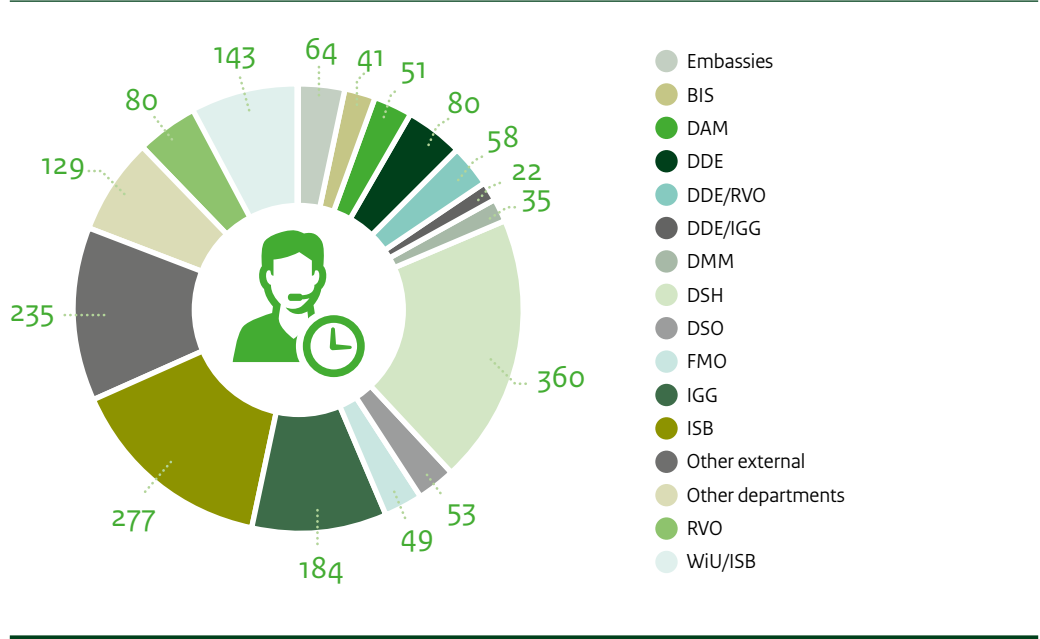
## IOB's help desk

In 2018, IOB's help desk again provided advice to departments and missions on designing and implementing evaluations that they organise themselves (the 'decentralised evaluations'). Such advice is provided in different ways and at different points in the evaluation process – from giving written commentary during the design of an evaluation study to participating in a reference group of an ongoing evaluation. If requested, IOB also provides advice about evaluation policies and research that is formulated or conducted outside the ministry.

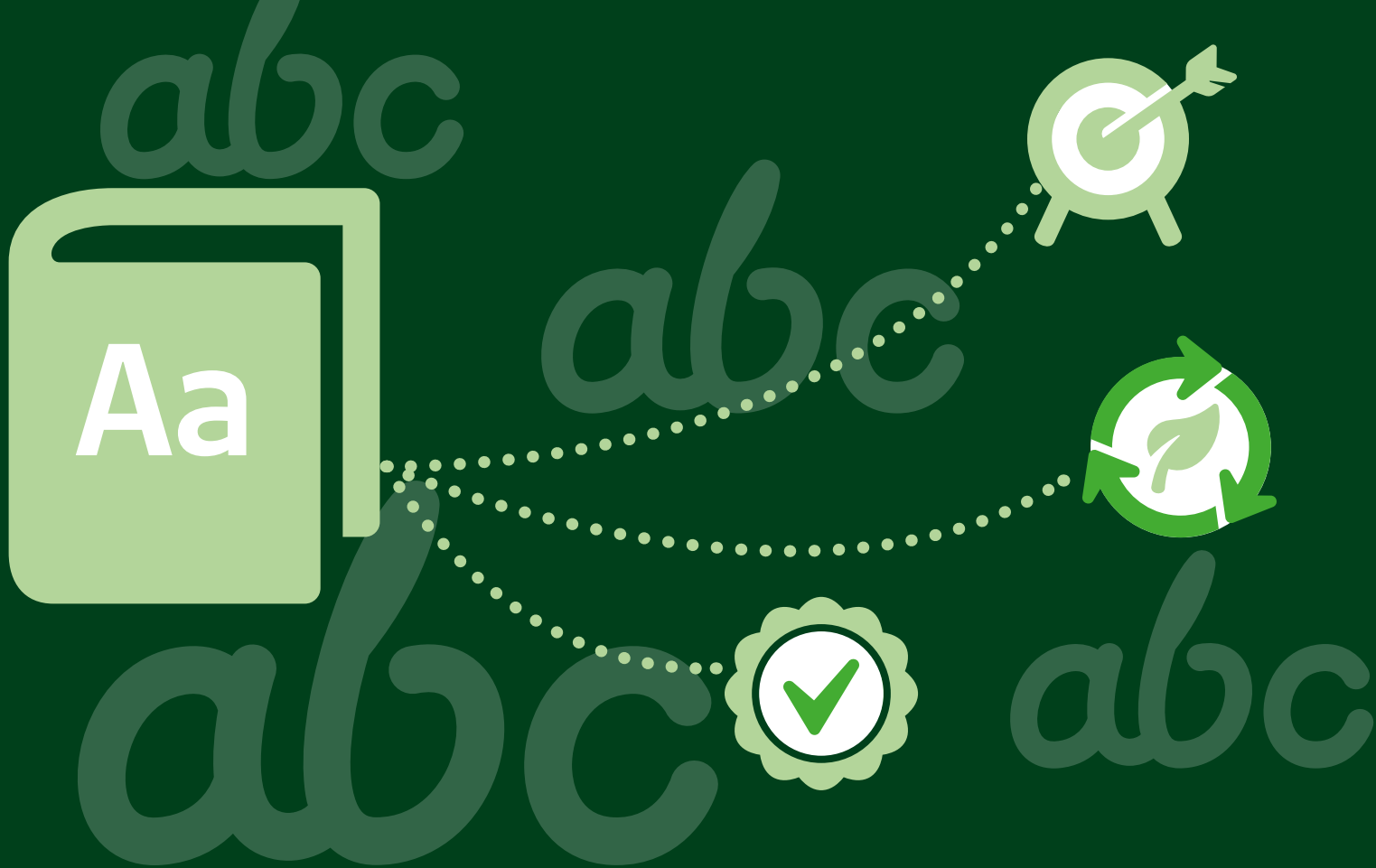
Compared to 2017, IOB's help desk answered more requests for advice, and hence spent more time advising: 145 requests for assistance compared to 81 in 2017, equalling almost 2,000 hours of advice compared to 1,800 in 2017. The largest users of IOB advice are DSH, IGG and DDE, totalling 500 hours, i.e. almost one quarter of IOB's entire advice work. The bulk of its advice work consists of assisting departments in the entire process from designing a programme evaluation up to producing the end report. IOB also supports in designing or adapting theories of change, in teaching courses on managing evaluations and research and in supporting the Inspection, Risk Analysis and Advisory Unit's (ISB) missions.

Finally, IOB also supported government-wide evaluative activities (i.e. outside the MFA) aimed at improving the quality and relevance of policy reviews.

Number of advisory hours per requesting unit, 2018







# Definitions

IOB uses evaluation criteria that largely coincide with the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC). The OECD/DAC definition uses five evaluation criteria to assess activities: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability. IOB has added the criterion of coherence to that list.

The evaluation criteria are used at various 'result levels', i.e. the levels of output, outcome and impact. These, in turn, are derived from the logical model or the result chains based on it, which enables researchers to present their findings in an ordered and coherent manner. How much emphasis each evaluation criterion receives, differs per evaluation.



## Effectiveness

Effectiveness concerns the extent to which the direct results of an aid activity (the output) contribute to the policy objectives (the outcome). An activity can be considered effective if it makes a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of the objectives.



## Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the extent to which the direct results of an aid activity (the output) weigh against the cost of the resources (input) and the way in which these are deployed. The concept therefore reflects a ratio (cost/benefit) and refers to a level of results that can be verified.



## Relevance

Relevance concerns the extent to which the effect of the aid activities contributes to the achievement of the desired objective. An activity's relevance can be measured by the results it generated that ultimately brought the development goal closer within reach. Sometimes relevance also refers to the extent to which the objectives of an activity are consistent with the needs of the target group or country in question.



## Sustainability

Sustainability concerns the extent to which an activity's achieved impact is lasting. This concept is therefore an aspect of effectiveness. It has several dimensions, such as socio-cultural, institutional, political, ecological and financial-economic sustainability.



## Coherence

Coherence refers to the extent to which the objectives and results of the policy are not damaged by other forms of policy or the extent to which the results of different policy efforts reinforce each other. This encompasses both consistent policy measures that avoid conflict between different policy areas, as well as policy coherence.

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